

BENSON & HEDGES

IN THE NEWS

SPECIAL EDITION

Vol. 1 No. 1

New York

Spring 1988

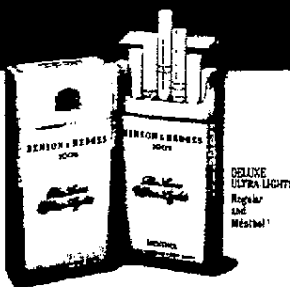


Much of the recent publicity about advertising has concerned the business itself. Seldom these days does the creative work make news and capture the popular imagination.

Wells, Rich, Greene's current print campaign for Benson & Hedges seems to have done just that. Particularly the ad at the left. The following pages contain highlights of the extensive coverage in the press garnered by this provocative advertising.



For people
who like
to smoke...



BENSON & HEDGES
because quality matters.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette
Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

6 mg "tar," 0.5 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, by FTC method.

What they said.

**"Madison Avenue
is all abuzz!"**

The Wall Street Journal pg. 2

"Who is the pajama man?"

Newsweek pg. 2

"Just a guy in jammies?"

Advertising Age pg. 3

**"Arouses curiosity
and questions!"**

USA Today pg. 3

"What is going on here?"

WNBC-TV pg. 4

**"Keeps us looking
and guessing!"**

WCBS-TV pg. 5

"Smoldering mystery?"

Adweek pg. 6

2021151652

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 1988

Our Theory: He's the Ad's Creator,
And He's Been Given the Day Off

By RONALD ALSOP

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

NEW YORK—There's a hot new debate about cigarettes, and it doesn't have anything to do with anti-smoking laws or the health hazards of tobacco.

Madison Avenue is all abuzz about a quirky Benson & Hedges cigarette ad that shows a young man—clad only in his pajama bottom—interrupting a festive brunch. The curly-haired fellow stands at one end of a stylish dining room in which five well-dressed women and an older man, having finished eating, are relaxing over wine and cigarettes. In an adjacent smaller picture, the young man (with the older man's hand on his arm) exchanges a friendly pat with one of the women.

What goes on here?

Show and Tell

Interpretations range from the silly to the salacious. Barbara Lippert, Ad Week magazine's advertising critic, got so many calls and letters about the topless man that he became the subject of her column this week. One of her theories: "He's had particularly successful abdominal liposuction and is proudly showing the results."

Reviewing the feedback so far, executives at Wells, Rich, Greene, the ad agency for Benson & Hedges, say some people figure the guy lives next door and just straggled in, looking a bit lost. Others think he's

getting up late after having spent a pleasant but presumably exhausting night with some, or perhaps all, of the women.

Advertising Age magazine is so caught up in the intrigue that it's asking its readers to send in their explanations.

Ad executives are surprised—and a little envious—about the commotion. "It's attracting attention, and that's the hardest thing for advertising to do today," says Marvin Honig, chairman of William Esty.

Stephen Novick, an executive vice president at Grey Advertising, is amused by the response. "In Europe, I can't imagine people lifting an eyebrow over it," he says. "But this just shows how provincial and puritanical Americans are."

Some Kind of Natural

So what is the "official" interpretation? "There really is no script for our Benson & Hedges ads," says Kenneth Olshan, chairman of Wells Rich. "We just told the actors to do what they would naturally do at a brunch. We're trying to avoid clichés."

But Philip Morris Cos., the cigarette's maker, has a more complete—if rather tame—scenario. "It could be a woman's wine-tasting club having brunch," says Renee Simons, brand manager for Benson & Hedges. "Her father drops in first. Then her husband, who has slept in, walks into the room." And the sexual innuendo? "We never intended anything like that."

Newsweek

MAY 2, 1988

The Allure of
Ad Hoc Ads

Who is the pajama man?

It doesn't look like any party you ever threw. In one of the latest Benson & Hedges ads, a bare-chested young man in striped pajama bottoms wanders into a formal brunch where five attractive women and one balding man are sipping wine and puffing on cigarettes. Just what's going on here? Who is this guy in his jammies? So many people have asked those questions that Advertising Age magazine was recently compelled to sponsor a "What's Going on Here?" contest. Officials at Wells, Rich, Greene, the cigarette's ad agency, say the picture has prompted a flood of calls and letters. The strategy behind the concept? As it turns out, perhaps none at all. Rob Ramsel, the actor who played the pajama man, says the ad was largely the result of a fluke—and the keen eye of photographer Denis Piel. When Ramsel wandered into the picture from a bathroom setting where another B&H ad was being shot, Piel captured the ambiguous scene on film. "What does the ad mean?" laughs Ramsel. "It means that Robbie gets a check."



Fortuitous flukes: Benson & Hedges ad

2021451653


Advertising Age

April 11, 1988




WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 1988





For people
who like
to smoke...



BENSON & HEDGES
because quality matters.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette
Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

© 1988 Philip Morris Inc. All rights reserved.

An inkblot, or just a guy in jammies?

Someday Benson & Hedges' current campaign may replace the venerable Rorschach test. The "For people who like to smoke..." scenes leave as much to the imagination as any inkblot and are even more provocative.

For instance, has the shirtless fellow here just awakened from a 20-year nap? Just stumbled into the wrong house? Just (OK—bring on the inkblots) killed his mother?

Just what is going on here?

New York-based Wells, Rich, Greene, which handles B&H, isn't talking.

A Philip Morris Cos. spokeswoman insisted, "We attach no strict interpretations."

That's why we're asking you, Herr Reader, to pull up a couch, let your mind go blank and tell us, in 50 words or less: What's going on here?

Please send your replies to: WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? c/o ADVERTISING AGE, 220 E. 42nd St., New York 10017. Replies are due April 25.

If we print your reply here, you'll win a nifty, high-quality AD AGE T-shirt. Don't forget to include your size preference: small, medium, large or extra large. #

AD NOTES

A QUICK READ ON TRENDS IN ADVERTISING

Cigarette ad arouses curiosity and questions

First, it was the ambiguous and vaguely sexual look that sparked interest in Benson & Hedges' "Pajama Bottoms" ad. Since March, readers of national magazines have puzzled over a B&H ad that shows five handsome, upscale women of the '80s and one middle-aged bald guy enjoying their cigarettes and wine after brunch. But who's the bare-chested young man strolling through the dining room in his PJs? And what are they all laughing about?

What does it mean? Whatever you want it to mean. There is no correct interpretation, insists Philip Morris Cos., maker of the cigarettes.

But now comes controversy over how the shot came about. The actor in the pajamas told *Newsweek* it was accidental. As he tells it, he was walking through the set to get to another when the photographer started shooting.

Not so say Philip Morris and Mason Boyd, who helped cast for the ad. "This idea that he just sort of wandered in is absurd," Boyd says.

2021151654

WNBC-TV 4



PROGRAM: LIVE AT FIVE

STATION: WNBC/TV

DATE: APRIL 13, 1988 5:30 P.M.

CITY: NEW YORK

BROADCAST EXCERPT

JACK CAFFERTY: *Liz Smith is with us now and she has a story about a new and sexy advertising campaign and a bit of sixties nostalgia. Liz?*



LIZ SMITH: *Well, Jack, you know, tobacco advertising has been banned from television for many years now. We haven't seen a dancing cigarette in ages, and no-smoking signs are appearing all over the place these days. So what is the beleaguered tobacco industry to do?*

Well, let's take a look at one example, an advertisement being run everywhere for Benson & Hedges cigarettes.

Now, true, it hasn't run on television, because that is forbidden, but today we are going to look at the print media of this ad and consider it in the news light.

The photograph shows us a young man clad only in pajama bottoms. He's being greeted by a tableful of women — there are five of them — and by one older man. And all these people are smoking and seem to be consuming copious bottles of wine, because there are five bottles of wine on the table. These people are either drunks or oenophiles, I don't know which.

And did this guy just get up for breakfast? If so, these people are drinking awfully early in the morning.

Are the women his sisters and his dad, his family, his friends, or what are they? Is he late for the orgy, or are they late?

Maybe this is a depiction of a late-riser at Sunday noon, or maybe he is an anchorman who works late at night and sleeps in the daytime.

Benson & Hedges has been getting a lot of phone calls about this ad, asking what it means. And they say — now, get this. They spent a lot of money putting it into magazines. They say it means nothing. It is merely supposed to pique your curiosity, and I suppose that it's meant to glamorize smoking — and drinking, by the way.

The publication Advertising Age has even announced a contest about this ad. They want readers to tell them in fifty words or less what is going on here.

Jack, we can ask the same question about "Live at Five."

CAFFERTY: *That's true, and...*

SMITH: *But we're afraid Sue would have an answer, right? (laughter)*



2021151655

2 WCBS-TV



PROGRAM: BUSINESS THIS MORNING STATION: WCBS-TV
DATE: APRIL 14, 1988 6:00 A.M. CITY: NEW YORK

BROADCAST EXCERPT

DOUG RAMSEY: *In our Madison Avenue segment, we usually zero in on the good and the bad in TV commercials. Today, Barbara Lippert is all worked up about a print ad. Guess why? Barbara?*

BARBARA LIPPERT: *Thanks, Doug.*

Perhaps, you've seen this series of cigarette ads. It's Benson & Hedges' craftily composed photos of moments in the lives of young, happy puffers. That's 30-something for the nicotine set. All of the scenes in these ads look right out of movies. But this latest one is a real mystery. Take a look.

There is a young, bare-chested man in pajama bottoms standing, cigarette in hand, in a dining-room where five women and one older man appear to be having brunch.

Now, a half-naked man caught padding around a female-dominated brunch does get the mind to working. Is this the male equivalent to dreaming you conquered Paris in your Maidenform bra? What is going on here? Here are some possibilities.

That he's wearing pajamas because he holds the classic post-coital cigarette and that those are five satisfied women.

Or that this is an early-afternoon Passover seder and, after thousands of years of waiting for him, the prophet Elijah has arrived, in pajama bottoms.

Or that this guy has just had highly-successful abdominal liposuction surgery and wants to show off the results.

Certainly the ad keeps us looking and guessing, which is advertising's main objective. But would you really want to hang around with this crowd?

RAMSEY: *Barbara, I certainly wouldn't want to hang around with this crowd.*

How does this sway anyone who is a smoker?

LIPPERT: *Well, it's supposed to be real people, real cigarettes, real life, real wine. And it's — actually, when you think about it, it's almost not as dumb as those people who have just reeled in a big fish or are in wetsuits smoking. I mean, that makes no sense at all. At least these people are sort of slothful and they're sitting around drinking and eating and smoking.*

RAMSEY: *Which is supposedly what smokers do, is that it?*

LIPPERT: *Right.*

RAMSEY: *Okay. Barbara Lippert, thanks very much. See you next week.*

LIPPERT: *Thank you.*

2021151656

ADWEEK

April 11, 1988

ADWEEK CRITIQUE

By Barbara Lippert



**PHILIP MORRIS U.S.A.'S
BENSON & HEDGES**

AGENCY: *Wells, Rich, Greene*
CREATIVE GROUP/CONCEPT:
*Mary Wells Lawrence, Charlie Moss,
Chris Hansen, Jayme Eastman*
CREATIVE GROUP/EXECUTION:
Ron Albrecht, Marcia Grace
PHOTOGRAPHER: *Denis Piel*



Benson & Hedges' mystery man has elicited quite a response.

Benson & Hedges: Bared Chest Leads to Smoldering Mystery

How's this scenario for taking our minds off tough new no-smoking laws and fired up tobacco clients: a bare-chested man in pajama bottoms shows up, cigarette in hand, in the middle of somebody's brunch, at which five young women and one older man have already eaten the croissants and are up to the wine 'n' cigarettes course.

This is the latest in a series of craftily composed photos in Benson & Hedges ads. They give us warm, contemporary moments in the lives of young, upscale smokers: that's *thirtysomething* for the nicotine set. I wrote about these very cinematic ads last year, but return to them now after receiving numerous letters and phone calls about the half-naked mystery man.

It would seem that a man caught padding around in light cotton bottoms at a female-dominated brunch does not go unnoticed. I guess it's the male equivalent of dreaming you conquered Paris in your Maidenform bra.

It also reminds me of a toddler in pajamas coming out to an adult party as the guests smile and say, "Look who's here!"

Maybe it's the placement of the protruding belly button just in front of that fake Impressionist painting, but this situation seems to have gotten much more response than others. All of the ads were shot about 18 months ago, using the Levi's 501 approach to advertising: Get a bunch of non-actor actor types, put them into loosely

Is the guy holding the classic post-coital cigarette, and are those five very satisfied ladies?

drawn up situations and groups, and shoot. The photographer, Denis Piel, was on location in Australia and unavailable for comment, but his assistant told me that this brunch photo was based a bit on the family meals in Woody Allen's movie *Hannah and Her Sisters*, with the older man as someone's dad. The younger man is still open to interpretation.

It seems that this brunch scene was shot in the same Manhattan apartment as a previous scene of a woman sitting next to her bathtub, wrapped in a towel, puffing away.

The pajamaed guy was in the background in some of those photos, but never turned up in an ad. The sisterhood-is-powerful women in the brunch scene were also pictured together in an earlier ad, sitting in a living room, drinking that same wine, and leaning into each other. They look far more sophisticated in this dining room setting, with the French bistro tableware.

But surely there are other explanations. I've gathered some of them:

- That this is really a pajama party, and he is the only one dressed appropriately.
- That he's outfitted that way because he holds the classic post-coital cigarette, and those are five very satisfied ladies.
- That this is an early afternoon Passover seder and, after thousands of years of waiting and opening the door for him, the prophet Elijah finally shows up in his pajama bottoms.
- That he's had particularly successful abdominal liposuction and is proudly showing the results.

Whatever the case, the provocative scene provides an immensely clever smoke-screen for the smoking issue.

2021151657